



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/705,780	11/10/2003	Satoshi Mizutani	20050/0200474-US0	4388

7278 7590 07/27/2005

DARBY & DARBY P.C.
P. O. BOX 5257
NEW YORK, NY 10150-5257

EXAMINER

STEPHENS, JACQUELINE F

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3761

DATE MAILED: 07/27/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/705,780

Applicant(s)

MIZUTANI ET AL.

Examiner

Jacqueline F. Stephens

Art Unit

3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☒ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>11/22/04, 7/7/04.</u> | 6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>IDS filed 6/14/04, 4/6/04.</u> |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 8 and 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 8 recites the limitation "water permeable surface side sheet in said protruded area" in lines 2-3 and "said first absorbent body" in line 3. There is insufficient antecedent basis for these limitations in the claim.

Claim 16 recites the limitation "said mini sheet piece" in lines 2-3. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-4, 9, 10, 12, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson USPN 4595392.

As to claims 1, 2, and 11, Johnson discloses an interlabial pad having a water-permeable surface side sheet 7, an absorbent body 6, and a back side sheet 8. The interlabial pad comprises a flat area 10, a protruded area 3 in which a finger can be inserted for use (Figure 3). Johnson does not specifically disclose the dimensions of the article. However, In *Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc.*, 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), *cert. denied*, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984), the Federal Circuit held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device.

As to claim 3, see Figure 2

As to claim 4, see Figures 2 and 3.

As to claim 5, see Figure 2, where the absorbent body 6 comprises the protruded portion and flat portions.

As to claim 9, Johnson discloses the interlabial pad has a tacking agent 4 (Figures 2 and 3).

As to claims 10, 12, and 13, the claims are directed to an intended use of the article. The manner in which the article is used is directed to an intended use of the article. Intended use must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from

Art Unit: 3761

the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963).

5. Claims 1, 6, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by McFall USPN 6183587.

As to claim 1, McFall discloses an interlabial pad having a water-permeable surface side sheet 44, an absorbent body 22, and a back side sheet 72 (Figures 2-6). The interlabial pad comprises a flat area 24 and a protruded area 20. McFall does not specifically disclose the dimensions of the article. However, In *Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc.*, 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), *cert. denied*, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984), the Federal Circuit held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device.

As to claim 6, the pad comprises a second protruded area 36, 38.

As to claim 7, the pad has third absorbent body in the second protruded area (Figure 2).

Applicant admits the cylindrical portion of the present invention may be formed only when a finger is inserted therein (specification page 4, second paragraph). Therefore, the manner in which the cylindrical portion is formed is directed to an intended use of the article. Intended use must result in a structural difference between

Art Unit: 3761

the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963).

As to claim 2, see Figure 39 the areas surrounding 3900,3902 are considered the flap portions.

As to claim 5, McFall discloses the cylindrical portion comprises an extensible material (col. 27, lines 20-30)

As to claim 9, McFall discloses the an embodiment where the wearer inserts her hand in the absorbent, which has an another tub of absorbent on the base sheet 24. In which case, the surface sheet would be outside an inside the cylindrical portion.

As to claims 10 and 11, the claims are directed to an intended use of the article. see the discussion of claim 1 with regard to intended use limitations.

6. Claims 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson USPN4595392 in view of Farris et al. USPN 6131736.

, Johnson does not disclose a wrapping sheet for covering and enclosing the interlabial product. Farris et al. discloses a packaging device including a wrapping sheet 40 for the benefit of storing the interlabial device until ready for use in such a manner that the user neither touches nor contaminates the surface of the absorbent in handling (Farris col. 5, lines 45-52). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the invention of Johnson to include a packaging device for the benefits taught in Farris.

Double Patenting

7. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

8. Claims 1-4, 10, 12, and 13 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 2, 6-13, 15-16 of copending Application No. 10705408. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because a change in size is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Rose*, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

13. Claims 1-16 provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-16 of copending Application No. 10705779. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other a change in size is generally recognized

Art Unit: 3761


as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Rose*, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jacqueline F. Stephens whose telephone number is (571) 272-4937. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:00-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tanya Zalukaeva can be reached on (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Jacqueline F Stephens
Examiner
Art Unit 3761

July 25, 2005